

Her Revenge

By NELLIE C. GILLMORE

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Young Preston greeted his fiancée with laughing surprise. There was no responsive smile on the face of Betty Rhodes. She held up the incriminating, long pink glove. The ultimate had happened; it was another girl's property. Preston had dropped it from his top coat pocket the night before, in the Rhodes' front corridor, and Betty's icy little note had reached him the following morning in the distinct guise of an unanswerable argument. But he loved her very dearly; she was hot-headed and headstrong, and Tom Preston had no notion of sitting silent under her unjust reproaches. He preferred to treat the whole matter lightly, without resentment, until he could win her over to listen to reason.

"I haven't the slightest idea of whom the glove belongs," he began, "but you know very well—"

Betty laughed scornfully. "You know perfectly," he persisted, "that nothing feminine under the sun contains a particle of interest for me except—"

"I was once stupid enough to think so," she cut in coldly. "But Providence has been good enough to open my eyes in time. There is no reasonable explanation of what has happened. But if you had only been candid I might have overlooked the offense. The fact of your duplicity is what hurts."

Preston thrust both hands into his pockets and stretched his foot toward the fender. Things looked serious. He had never known Betty to be so uncompromising. The situation was difficult. And worse than all, his hands were tied. He was helpless to cope with a problem of whose very prime elements he knew nothing. He could not recall a single girl in pink



for months and months back. Besides, Betty had been the only girl—the sum total of all girls—for almost a year!

"If you had ever really cared for me and trusted me," he said gravely, "an accident of this sort could not have influenced your feelings."

Betty's lips crimped; her lids drooped dangerously. "I am sorry to say that my love, unfortunately, is not of such a lofty order. I am just a plain human being—and there is no evasion of a proven fact. Hereafter we meet as strangers, if we meet at all."

Preston paled slightly, though the assumed brightness of his face scarcely varied. Suddenly he bethought himself of an heroic measure.

"My regiment has been ordered to Manila; it is not likely I shall annoy you by crossing your path in future," he remarked.

Betty would have started had she not reined in her impulses with an iron hand.

"We shall sail in a fortnight from San Francisco," continued Preston, watching the motionless line of her profile with furtive eyes. He pulled out his watch and studied its face intently for a second. As the girl said nothing, he rose and began to draw on his gloves. Suddenly he forced the appeal of his eyes upon her as she glanced up vacantly.

"Betty! Surely you are not going to let me go this way? You don't mean that everything is at an end? That all the dear, past days count for nothing in the face of this wretched accident over which I have no control? Believe me, dear, trust me—and come with me as my wife!"

Betty got up, pale and tremulous, and held out her hand. In it was the engagement ring she had slipped from her finger. Preston accepted it without a word and turned away.

When the door had closed upon him she sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands. The world swam about her in great circles. This was the very end. Now for the first time the full significance of her act came upon her with overwhelming force. What if he were innocent? She tried to tell herself that she had been lured to learn the truth before it was too late. She tried to make herself believe that her love was dead, killed by his ruthless betrayal

of her most sacred trust. But the deep-rooted feelings of years could not so easily be torn up and flung aside.

In the midst of her despair there came a peremptory ring at the front door. Tom! Her pulses bounded. He had come back to her to tell her that he had found the owner of the glove and the reason for its being in his pocket! The solution flashed luminously across her brain. She rose, steadying herself by an effort, and hurried to the door. But the man standing there was a stranger.

"I beg your pardon," he commenced, "but I was told I might find Mr. Preston here?"

"He left about a half hour ago," said Betty jerkily. "I think perhaps you could reach him at his office."

"Thank you very much, but I'm afraid I shan't have time to get by there. I'm trying to catch that 9:30 train south. I very carelessly walked off with his topcoat last night. We were at the club together, and I left first, taking his coat, which is the counterpart of mine, with me. If you would be good enough to let him know that I have left his at the club and ask him to forward mine to Atlanta I should be greatly obliged."

Betty kept down her exhalation long enough to assure him that she "would be delighted," then turned and re-entered the room in a tumult of emotions. The first thing she did was to ring up Preston's office. He was not there. He was not at home, either, and as time passed and there came no answering call, she went wearily to bed and spent a dazed night.

The following morning she read in the paper that the Third regiment would leave immediately for the Philippines instead of two weeks hence, as originally ordered. She quitted the breakfast table, leaving her food untasted. What if he had already gone and she would never see him again? A little sob rose in her throat and choked her. All at once the possibility became a reality, and she began to wring her hands. She had sent him to his death—broken her own heart and his—acted the part of a despicable wretch.

She went into the morning room and began to straighten the books and papers. But the atmosphere suffocated her and she hurried out to the garden to cut fresh roses for the vases. The tears were falling fast as she bent to snip the flaming jacquemints from the bush, when suddenly she felt the pressure of warm palms over her bulging eyes. Startled, she turned and Preston caught her in his arms.

"We're sailing at three," he said, "and I couldn't endure the thought of going so far without making one more attempt. You—you'll not refuse to tell me good-by, Betty? It—it may be the last time we'll ever meet."

Betty's roses dropped in a crimson shower to the ground. When she could find her voice, she said tremulously, "No, I shall not tell you good-by, Tom. I can't."

Preston's arms fell limp at his sides. The light died out of his face. He looked down for a moment and drew her glance to his. Their eyes merged; hers, tentative, radiant; his, puzzled, deepening with shadows. Betty's brave glance flickered beneath the pleading tenderness of his. Preston's question hung mute upon his lips.

"I have other plans," she whispered with her cheek against his sleeve. "I mean to be revenged. Consequently, I shall go with you."

Regardless of possible passers-by, Preston drew her to his arms.

Afterward, she told him about the coats.

Strange Lizard.

Living specimens of a strange frilled lizard of Australia have been transported to England, where photography has most convincingly proved the truth of the legend that these animals, which sometimes attain a length of three feet, are in the habit of running about erect on their hind legs. The lizards are furnished with a broad frill, or collar, round the neck, which lies folded unless the animal is threatened. In that case it immediately spreads its frill like a suddenly opened umbrella to frighten off the enemy. When running on its hind legs, with its long tail swinging in the air, it presents an irresistibly ludicrous appearance.

There was a time, in the Jurassic age, when this method of locomotion was common among giant reptiles; but now the chlamydosaurus is the sole surviving species of reptile that assumes an erect attitude when running.

Self-Education.

The education, moral and intellectual, of every individual must chiefly be his own work. There is a prevailing and fatal mistake on this subject. It seems to be supposed that, if a young man be sent first to a grammar school, and then to college, he must, of course, become a scholar; and the pupil himself is apt to imagine that he is to be the mere passive recipient of instruction, as he is of the light and atmosphere which surround him. But this dream of indolence must be dissipated, and young men must be awakened to the important truth that, if they aspire to excellence, they must become active and vigorous co-operators with their teachers, and work out their own distinction with an ardor that cannot be quenched, a perseverance that considers nothing done while anything yet remains to be done.

If.

If we all received vot ve dmk ve desert dare would be nuding left for der udder fellow.—Dinkelspiel in New York American.

HIS FORTUNE

By CLARISSA MACKIE

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Bess Purdy and her father watched the four young men ride away from the house and then their eyes met in a look of loving sympathy.

"I do hope they'll make a strike this time, dad," said Bess earnestly. "Jim said they were to ride away over to Rattlesnake Mountain and separate at the base—each one prospecting for himself. Seems as if they hadn't had much luck so far, this year."

"No more they haven't," admitted John Purdy, sitting down on the steps and filling his pipe; "but they're all young, honey—and you don't find gold every day. Mostly, you find it just once in all your prospecting."

"Perhaps this will be the one day for each of them," smiled Bess, rumpling her father's mop of curly gray hair. "Dad, you're positively growing old!"

Mr. Purdy laughed the low rumbling bass notes that his daughter loved to hear.

"I've got enough on my mind—and conscience—to make my hair as white as snow," he remarked ruefully.

"What is it, father? Something is worrying you and you have not told me!" Bess dropped down on her knees beside her father and lifted his chin in one brown little hand. "Look me in the eyes, dad!" she commanded.

Mr. Purdy turned mirthful gray eyes upon hers, so like his own. "I'm looking—eh?"

"What is the matter?"

Her father removed his pipe from between his lips and looked into the bowl, then he squinted down the stem, and finally knocked the contents out and dropped the pipe in his pocket, with an air of determination.

"You saw those four chaps ride away, Bess?" he asked seriously.

"Yes," said the girl, with interest.

"Bill Melvin, Owen Ransom, Bert Clayton and Jimmy Alvin—four as nice fellows as ever came into the gold country to seek their fortunes—eh?"

"Yes," Bess was blushing faintly now but her clear glance still held her father's gray eyes.

"Well, last night, one time or another, every dad-blamed one of those boys came and asked me if—it—He paused and looked away down the crooked street of the little mining town, and this time Bess did not say anything, but the flush on her cheek grew deeper.

"Every one of those boys came and asked me if he could come and court my daughter—provided he made some sort of a lucky strike this trip."

There was a little silence and then Bess asked faintly, "What did you say, dad?"

"I said they could come whether they'd made their fortunes or not—and that I didn't know what your mind was about it—and that they better run ahead and locate their claims."

"They all asked you that question, dad?"

"Yes, honey—and I don't know which one of 'em it is—but it's one of the four—eh?"

She nodded.

Purdy sighed and got upon his feet. "I reckon it'll be Bert Clayton—he's a handsome rascal and has rare good luck at everything."

Bess made no reply, but turned and ran into the house and up to her little room with shining eyes and hot cheeks.

Several weeks passed slowly while the hot sun poured down out of a brass sky and the little mining town blistered under the scorching blaze. John Purdy, down in the assay office, thought of the four young men grubbing hopelessly around Rattlesnake Mountain—their scarred hillides had been vainly prospected for years. What would these youths get out of the burning ground save bitter suffering and untold harsh experiences?

It was a curious situation—four of their friends and all suitors for Bess Purdy's little brown hand!

Bess, working away at her household tasks in the motherless home, grew more dreamy-eyed and wistful as the days faded one into the other and no word came from the prospectors.

And then one night, after supper, when the whole town sat gasping upon the doorsteps, a messenger whirled madly down the main street on a dripping pony.

"A strike—a strike!" ran from lip to lip and then it was learned that the prospectors had indeed struck gold in Rattlesnake Mountain.

"The richest vein hereabouts—quickerest thing that ever happened. They was all four working at different points and three of 'em struck the vein—I guess it run clean through the mountain; the other fellow didn't get a blamed thing for his digging!" related the messenger.

"I reckon the other chaps will let the unlucky fellow in on the claim," remarked Purdy casually.

"Like enough," said the other, proceeding on his exciting journey down the street. "I didn't ask which ones made the find—they was all excited. They'll be here tomorrow, Purdy, with some stuff for you to assay."

Bess and her father sat motionless a long time. At last the girl spoke. "I wonder who it was—the one who didn't find anything," she murmured half to herself.

"I was asking myself that question," said Mr. Purdy thoughtfully.

The next day, just as John Purdy

reached his house at dinner time, there was the sound of hoof-beats down the sunny street. Bess came to the inside of the green-shuttered door and, quite unseen, saw three young men gallop to the porch and greet her father with boyish excitement.

There were Bill Melvin and Owen Ransom and Bert Clayton—but the fourth, where was he? Bess leaned against the door, pale and still.

The men were talking fast—all together—and John Purdy was asking sharp, pointed questions regarding the reputed find. The assayer nodded approval of the samples of ore they displayed.

"Where's Jimmy Alvin?" he asked tersely.

The three looked at each other and Clayton pointed a thumb in the direction from which they had come. "Alvin acted that mullish," complained the young prospector in an injured tone, "he was just as near locating the claim as the rest of us—but just because he didn't happen to scratch pay dirt and we did, he won't touch a thing! He rode on with us to Horseshoe Rock—and said he'd be along later. We argued with him till he started to fight the crowd and so we came on!"

"He's right, boys," said Purdy gravely. "You three made the strike—that's all square—and it belongs to you. I just guess Alvin's unlucky. Maybe he'll strike next time!"

"He says he's going back home and settle down in the grocery business alongside of his dad," remarked Melvin ruefully, and then as the three lucky prospectors moved reluctantly away, he called back over his shoulder and voiced the unspoken words of his comrades: "I hope Miss Bess is well, Mr. Purdy."

"First rate, thank you," said Purdy, watching them ride down the street with a brooding look in his eyes. He was still gazing when his daughter

ters white pony pounced around the side of the house and on his back was Bess, her face pale under a flapping hat.

"Dinner's all ready for you, father. I'll be home by and by—I'm going after—Jim!"

She flew up the street and his eyes followed the cloud of dust in her wake until horse and rider blurred into the gray trail. "I knew it," he muttered with a satisfied smile. "I knew it was Jimmy—and he's the cream of a good lot!"

Later, at the assay office, John Purdy reported on the samples of ore that the prospectors had brought in.

"You're rich men—every one of you, boys. Here's my hand on it—you deserve all of it!" he said heartily.

"I wish you could argue with Jim and make him come in on this—there's no use in him being poor," said Melvin.

"Jim Alvin's made a luckier strike than any of you, boys," said Purdy coolly. "He's the richest man in town this minute!"

"How? When?" they demanded eagerly.

"Look!" said Purdy, pointing out of the window.

Coming down the street, the heads of their ponies close together, and with the unmistakable air of those who are above all earthly considerations, were two riders; one was Bess Purdy, flushed and lovely under her flapping hat, and the other was Jim Alvin—the unlucky prospector.

"That's Jim's strike—pure gold," murmured Purdy, without looking at the three young men.

One by one they stole away and saddled their horses and disappeared; and there was not one who would not gladly have exchanged places with Jim Alvin at that moment.

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